



WYOMING UPDATE

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 2 Director's Message | 5 Not So Fast! |
| 3 Outings | 6 The Challenge is Yours! |
| 4 The Black Hills | 6 Farwell to Brent Lathrop |
| 4 Where the Wild Things Go | 7 Our New State Director: Hayley Mortimer |

CONNECT WITH NATURE: [NATURE.ORG/WYOMING](https://www.nature.org/wyoming)





News from Heart Mountain

To bring more predictability for our visitors, we have decided to close Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve to unscheduled visits from March 1 until the first Sunday in June and from October 1 until December 30 each year. This will also help protect wildlife and maintain conditions on the trail. We will continue to host group activities during the closure periods and look forward to seeing you this summer!





Board of Trustees

Lenox Baker	Mary Hayes	Anne Pendergast
Frank Bonsal*	Dennis Knight*	Adair Stifel
Indy Burke	Ken Lay	Margie Taylor
Steve Buskirk	Kathy Lichtendahl	Paul Ulrich
Barron Collier*	Mayo Lykes	Fred C. Whiting*
Richard M. Davis*	Chris Madson	Page Williams
Mark Doelger	Reid Murchison	David Work
Frank Goodyear	Peter Nicolaysen	Anne Young*
Doug Gouge	Gilman Ordway*	
		* Emeritus

 The Nature Conservancy is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) international membership organization. Its mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. An annual membership fee of \$25 includes membership to the Wyoming Chapter and the worldwide organization.

 The Nature Conservancy meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability established by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a national charity watchdog affiliated with the Better Business Bureau.

Printed on 100% PCW recycled, process chlorine-free paper, creating the following benefits:

 2.9 trees preserved for the future	 285.2 lbs. solid waste not generated	 2,787.9 gal. water saved	 937.1 lbs. CO ₂ prevented
--	--	---	---

Dear Friends,

Ever since I learned to fly-fish on The Nature Conservancy's Silver Creek Preserve outside Picabo, Idaho, at the age of seven, I knew that The Nature Conservancy was a special organization with a critical mission. Now, almost five decades later, I am thrilled to join The Nature Conservancy as the Wyoming State Director. I hope to get to know many of you across the state in the coming year. Because this newsletter goes to print several weeks before it arrives in your homes, it's impossible to say what changes we will be seeing in our daily lives, but I did want to reach out to let everyone know that you are in my thoughts

Our entire team hopes that you and your friends and families are healthy and have continued to support each other during these difficult times. Some of our ability to gather together may slow down temporarily, but we are doing everything we can to actively conserve Wyoming's lands, waters, wildlife and people in ways that keep our staff and partners safe. Our protection and stewardship work will endure no matter the social distances we must maintain with one another.

I hope that this newsletter offers assurance that our commitment to nature remains as strong as ever.

Thanks for all you do on behalf of nature to keep Wyoming wild and working. Please stay in touch. We need you on the team now more than ever!



Hayley Mortimer
State Director
The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming

JOIN US!

There are lots of great ways to connect with nature this summer. Please note that because of current health concerns, these listings are subject to change. Please check nature.org/events for details and updates.

Conservation Chat QUARTERLY

See nature.org/events for dates

Join state director Hayley Mortimer in regular online conversations about TNC's work and learn how your support is helping us to achieve tangible conservation outcomes in Wyoming.



Heart Mountain Community Hike

JUNE 13, POWELL

Walk up Heart Mountain at this time of year and you're likely to find many plants in bloom. You may even spot some wildlife. Choose your own pace: a leisurely stroll or a speedy shot for the summit. This is a great time to learn what makes Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve such a special place.



Challenge for Charities JULY 4, LANDER

Kick off the Fourth by showing your support for local nonprofits at the annual Lander Half Marathon and 5K races. You can choose to run or walk. Either way, your participation helps TNC receive matching funds from the Lander Community Foundation in support of our work in the local area.



Wyoming BioBlitz JULY 17-19, BIGHORN

Bring friends and family for a 24-hour adventure identifying as many plants, animals and insects as you can at this fun and enriching annual event. This year, we'll be at the Brinton Museum in the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains.



Antelope Dash AUGUST 29, LARAMIE/CHEYENNE

The race runs through some beautiful country over a rugged trail in Curt Gowdy State Park. This run is challenging at either the 4-mile or 8-mile distance. Join TNC staff on the trail and learn about our projects statewide while taking in the sights and getting a healthy workout.

Saved!

The Grand Canyon of the Black Hills is an extraordinary place, rich in plant and animal life as well as human history. The Nature Conservancy is proud to have played a role in protecting it for nature and the people of Wyoming. For five years, TNC led efforts to transfer this beautiful place from private to public ownership. In February, the Wyoming State Loan and Investment Board committed to its purchase, saving it from being subdivided into 80 private lots. TNC staff helped secure \$6 million toward the purchase through the Land and Water Conservation Fund's Forest Legacy program, which places restrictions on development and ensures a working forest will remain for generations to come. This iconic Wyoming feature sits at a biological crossroads where three types of forest converge with the grasslands of the Great Plains. This complexity supports a wonderfully diverse array of birds, wildlife and plants of special conservation concern.



Where the Wild Things Go

Herds of mule deer, elk and pronghorn are as essential to the Wyoming landscape as sagebrush and stunning mountain ranges. In order to thrive, these animals must be able to make their seasonal migrations safely and without barriers. Over the years, TNC and our partners have removed or modified miles of unneeded fences to eliminate those barriers to movement. We're also doing cutting-edge research and promoting policies to make it easier for wildlife to safely cross highways (see related story, next page). The challenge is, we still don't know exactly what routes these herds take between their winter and summer ranges, which makes it difficult to target our conservation efforts most effectively.

To gain that critical information, TNC is working with partners to place tracking devices on wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone and on the Wind River Reservation. Now, we are expanding that work to the northern Bighorn Mountains. For the first time, researchers are fitting dozens of



mule deer in that area with satellite tracking collars to map and study their movements. The data collected will be invaluable to efforts to conserve and improve habitat, shape hunting seasons and modify fences in the places where they will do the most good. They could also help scientists better understand the risks of chronic wasting disease in Wyoming herds.



Not So Fast!



It's commonly believed that posting lower speed limits will cut down on collisions between wildlife and vehicles. Not so, says a new study by TNC scientist Corinna Riginos.

Riginos and her team tested the idea that reducing nighttime speed limits during high-risk times will cause motorists to drive more slowly, giving them more time to avoid hitting animals on the road. The problem is, the average driver didn't obey the lower speed limit, and there was no reduction in the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Prior to this study, almost no data existed on whether reducing speed limits could decrease the number of these accidents. To test the practice, the researchers partnered with the Wyoming Department of Transportation to lower the nighttime speed limit at locations known to be important

winter and migration areas for mule deer. Nighttime speeds were changed since most wildlife-vehicle collisions occur in the dark. The team also collected data at adjacent locations where the speed limit was not reduced. On average, drivers slowed by only 3-5 mph rather than the posted 15 mph reduction, and there were no fewer wildlife collisions than before the speeds were lowered.

"Changing human behavior isn't easy," says Riginos. "The only sure way to significantly reduce these accidents is to build over- or underpasses that allow animals to cross roads without touching the pavement."

The Challenge is Yours!



Our Wyoming board of trustees is responsible for everything from providing advice to connecting us with key influencers. They are a group of passionate people representing all corners of our state and a broad range of experience, from university professors to business leaders to ranchers. Recently, nine of our current and former trustees rallied around one common goal—to create Together for Wyoming, a \$1 million matching fund, that will galvanize efforts to expand our reach across Wyoming and accelerate progress toward our conservation goals. As Board Chair Margie Taylor explains, “To build on the great work of the Wyoming Chapter’s last 30 years, I am delighted to help kick-start the next 30 years’ work.”

Board members participated for a variety of reasons. Trustee Frank Goodyear and his wife Betsy were moved by Margie Taylor’s leadership and the way other trustees stepped up to engage. Former trustee Mary Anne Dingus and her

husband Bill were “inspired by the commitment to the great conservation work of TNC Wyoming’s staff and volunteers.”

David Work, a trustee who has been involved with TNC for almost 40 years, feels a sense of urgency to tackle threats like climate change. “There is no other organization that has the reach and capability that TNC does,” he says. “I think about ensuring a future where my children and grandchildren can experience nature, and everyday life, in much the same way I do today.”

Together for Wyoming will match unrestricted gifts to TNC in Wyoming dollar-for-dollar:

- New or lapsed donors (no gift in past 3 years) who make a gift of \$1,000 or more
- Current donors (gift within past 3 years) who increase their most recent gift by \$1,000 or more, will have the increased portion matched

Pledges can qualify for the match but must be received in full by December 31, 2021.

To learn more about how you can qualify, please contact Erica Wood, WY Director of Development, at erica.wood@tnc.org or 973-919-9629 (cell).

Together for Wyoming Matching Fund Founders

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mary Anne and Bill Dingus | Margie Taylor |
| Frank and Betsy Goodyear | Page and Pearee Williams |
| Linda and Reid Murchison | David and Susie Work |
| Anne Pendergast | Anne Young |

Into the Sunset

This summer, we will bid farewell to southeast Wyoming program director Brent Lathrop. This native cornhusker made his way from Nebraska to our chapter in 2006, when he already had 14 years with TNC under his belt! His work has spanned projects from Crow Creek to the Platte River and from endangered Wyoming toads to majestic whooping and sandhill cranes, and both Wyoming and Nebraska are the better for it. Brent is also a champion for TNC’s Veterans in Nature’s Service employee resource group. After 28 years with TNC, he’s earned the right to kick back and enjoy some of the places that he’s played an important part in protecting. Happy trails, Brent!



Meet Our New State Director: Hayley Mortimer



Hayley Mortimer took the reins of the Wyoming Chapter on March 30, past the deadline for this publication. But we managed to catch up with her before we went to print for this short interview.

What hooked you on conservation?

Where I grew up in Hailey, Idaho, the mountains and rivers were my playground. And the Greater Yellowstone is especially near to my heart. Perhaps because of that background, I feel very strongly about nurturing people’s connection with place.

What drew you to TNC?

This is really a dream job for me. Years ago, I watched as TNC’s Silver Creek Preserve near Hailey was created. Seeing how that came together fueled my admiration for the work of the organization. This job also gives me the opportunity to work in much bigger landscapes than a park, which has very specific boundaries.

But what really drew me to TNC are the conservation priorities that the organization has set. I am both alarmed about climate change and committed to finding local solutions to the problem. TNC is a leader on this issue.

What strengths do you bring to the job?

My experience in finance and leadership development for public land agencies has given me a profound understanding of the limitations those managers face. That helps me understand how the private sector can fill in the gaps so we can effectively complete the conservation picture.

I am especially dedicated to building leadership at the local level and connecting youth to nature. One of the chapter’s priorities is conserving the future of conservation, and what better way to do that than mentoring and empowering youth?

Hayley is based in our Lander headquarters.

OUR MISSION | TO CONSERVE THE LANDS AND WATERS ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS

Wyoming update

SPRING/SUMMER 2020



 [facebook/NatureConservancyWyoming](https://www.facebook.com/NatureConservancyWyoming)

THIS PAGE Hiking Heart Mountain © Zack Mason



LEAVE A LEGACY FOR NATURE

The Legacy Club is a special group of supporters who have made a life-income gift to The Nature Conservancy or named us as a beneficiary in their estate plans. Members receive exclusive benefits such as a semiannual newsletter, TNC's annual report and invitations to special trips and events. But the real benefit is knowing they've helped keep Wyoming wild and working.

Won't you join them in making a gift for the future of conservation?

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Erica Wood
Erica.Wood@tnc.org
973-919-9629 (cell)
nature.org/legacy

The Nature Conservancy cannot render tax or legal advice. Please consult your financial advisor before making a gift.